



State of Utah

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF OIL, GAS AND MINING

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May 16, 2000

TO: Internal File

FROM: Wayne H. Western, Team Lead *WHW*

RE: Coal Mine Waste Rock Amendment, Plateau Mining Corporation, Willow Creek Mine, ACT/007/038-AM00D

SUMMARY:

On April 21, 2000, the Division received amendment ACT/007/038-AM00D entitled the Willow Creek Mine Coal Mine Waste Rock Amendment. The review team consisted of Bob Davidson, Pete Hess and Wayne Western. The permittee wants to amend their MRP to use material from the refuse pile for road base on surface and underground mines. The review team approved the use of the material for underground road base but not for the surface.

TECHNICAL ANALYSIS:

OPERATION PLAN

SPOIL AND WASTE MATERIALS

Regulatory Reference: 30 CFR Sec. 701.5, 784.19, 784.25, 817.71, 817.72, 817.73, 817.74, 817.81, 817.83, 817.84, 817.87, 817.89; R645-100-200, -301-210, -301-211, -301-212, -301-412, -301-512, -301-513, -301-514, -301-521, -301-526, -301-528, -301-535, -301-536, -301-542, -301-553, -301-745, -301-746, -301-747.

Analysis:

Coal Mine Waste

The permittee processes coal mine waste to separate coal from the waste rock. The coal is sold as a product and the waste rock sent to the refuse pile. The permittee proposes to use that

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waste rock as road base for underground and surface roads. Besides being a source of road base the plan would reduce how much material goes to the refuse pile.

The permittee supports the plan by siting the regulations on disposal of coal mine waste in special area (See heading on Page 5.4-57 of the amendment). R645-301-536.500 addresses the disposal of coal mine waste in special areas. That regulations deals with the disposal of coal mine waste produced in one permitted area and sent for disposal in another permitted area. Instead of shipping the coal mine waste to another permitted area the permittee proposes to place coal mine waste outside the permit area or in areas within the permit boundary that have not been approved as refuse piles.

R645-301-536 requires that all coal mine waste be disposed in approved disposal areas within the permit boundaries. For underground mines those disposal areas are refuse piles and underground disposal area. Since the road inside the permit that the permittee proposes to place the coal mine waste are not approved disposal areas (refuse pile), the Division cannot approve that request.

R645-301-536.520 allows coal mine waste to be disposed in underground workings. The disposal plan must be approved by MSHA and the Division. MSHA reviewed the plan and approved the use of the coal mine waste to be used as underground road base. The Division also reviewed the request for underground disposal and concluded that the plan is adequate.

Refuse Piles

R645-301-536 requires that all coal mine waste be disposed in approved disposal areas within the permit boundaries. For underground mines those disposal areas are refuse piles and underground disposal area. Since the road inside the permit that the permittee proposes to place the coal mine waste are not approved disposal areas (refuse pile), the Division cannot approve that request.

Findings:

Information provided in the proposed amendment is not considered adequate to meet the requirements of this section. Prior to approval, the permittee must provide the following in accordance with:

R645-301-536, The Division cannot approve the permittee's request to place coal mine waste (rock separated from the processing of the refuse pile) on surface roads inside or outside the permit area. R645-301-536 requires that for surface disposal of coal mine waste the material must be placed in a refuse pile.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The amendment should be denied because the Division cannot allow coal mine waste to be placed on the surface except in refuse piles. The Division should inform the permittee that conceptual approval has been given to using the waste rock (coal mine waste) as underground road base.

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